

Judges 15 - Thursday, February 7th, 2013

(1) After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into *her* room." But her father would not permit him to go in. (2) Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. *Is* not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead." (3) And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!"

- We start off the chapter with Samson again getting angry, this time because of what happens he later returns to consummate the marriage.
- Upon learning of his father-in-law giving his wife to the best man and offering her sister instead, Samson becomes infuriated with him.
- One can't help but notice that Samson has an anger problem, the likes of which God will overrule in order to work it for His glory in the end.

(4) Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned *the foxes* tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. (5) When he had set the torches on fire, he let *the foxes* go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards *and* olive groves.

- This is quite a remarkable feat on Samson's part as it relates to the catching of three hundred foxes and the lighting of all of their tails.
- While some suggest that Samson had help in order to accomplish this, I'm not of the belief that this would in any way take away from this.
- What I mean by that is, this is a clear act of war against the Philistines, in that this would have been devastating and decimating financially.

(6) Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. (7) Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." (8) So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

- It seems that her best efforts to save her family and herself from the evil threats of her own people to burn them turned out to be of no avail.
- Then, if that weren't bad enough, these evil men are met with Samson's vengeance and wrath when he attacks them from "hip and thigh."
- By the way, Samson has only just begun to carry out that which God had called him to do in his overthrowing of the Philistine's oppression.

Charles Spurgeon - "Samson's marriage led to a complicated quarrel, during which he burned the standing corn of the Philistines by means of firebrands tied to the tails of foxes, (Jackals), and also slaughtered a great number of his enemies. He then went and dwelt at the top of the rock Etam, but God meant him to do far more for the overthrow of Israel's enemies, and therefore gave him but little respite."

- Lest you feel too sorry for the Philistines because of what Samson did to them in the prior verse, this verse most certainly puts that to rest.
- If you really think about it, for the Philistines to take his wife and her parents and burn them alive was pure evil in every sense of the word.
- What I find interesting is that there's a disproportionate irony in the sense that Samson burned their crops, but they burned his wife alive.

- The reason I point this out is because this retaliation goes contrary to the teachings of scripture both in the Old and New Testament as well.
- Make no mistake about it Samson has lowered himself to the level of the Philistines by virtue of how he tries to mete out his own revenge.
- The problem with this is it will become a bottomless pit in how you'll always end up having to "one-up" the enemy every time they retaliate.

Exodus 21:23-25 NKJV But if *any* harm follows, then you shall give life for life, (24) eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, (25) burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Matthew 5:38-42 NIV "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' (39) But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. (41) If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. (42) Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

- What Jesus is saying here is that we can overcome evil with good by not fighting back, and when we do, the enemy is unable to fight back.
- In other words, it takes two to fight. I'll take it a step further and suggest that it takes two to argue, in that one arguing alone isn't arguing.
- The bottom line is had Samson not took matters into his own hands in the first place taking teeth for a tooth, this wouldn't have happened.

(9) Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi. (10) And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us." (11) Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What *is* this you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that the men of Judah take three thousand men to arrest just one man.
- It seems that not only are they afraid of Samson, they are afraid of the Philistines, which is why they come to take him to the Philistines.
- What's interesting is that Samson has no fear whatsoever of whoever, whether they are the Philistines, or even his own Jewish brothers.

Charles Spurgeon - "The men of Judah had sunk to the condition of [being subservient], and were forced to be [obedient] to their tyrant masters. Sin makes men cowards. ...False brethren are our worst enemies, they will ruin us when our enemies cannot. Beware of hypocrites."

Proverbs 29:25 NKJV The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Hebrews 13:6 NKJV So we may boldly say: "THE LORD IS MY HELPER; I WILL NOT FEAR. WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME?"

(12) But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines." Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves." (13) So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

- I would suggest that woven into the fabric of these verses, we have a beautifully painted portrait of the Savior on the canvass of typology.
- Notice how that it's the men of Judah, from the tribe of Judah, who would ultimately be the ones in the end to betray their own deliverer?
- The reason I point this out is because it would be Judah who would betray Joseph, which also pictures, Judas who would betray Jesus.

Charles Spurgeon - "Does it not remind us of our Lord bound by those whom He came to deliver, and betrayed into the hands of His enemies?"

(14) When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that *were* on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands. (15) He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. (16) Then Samson said: "With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!" (17) And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.

- Apparently, the Philistines shouting in jubilee would be very short lived, as the Spirit of the Lord came quickly and mightily upon Samson.
- As Spurgeon better says it; "This shout came a little too soon. It was soon turned into a shriek of dismay, and then into the silence of death.
- This "silence of death" would come vis-à-vis the power and might of the Holy Spirit that would come upon Samson. It wasn't the jawbone.

- This miraculous victory by one man, over one thousand men, wasn't wrought by the jawbone in his hand it was the Holy Spirit in his heart.
- The reason I say that, that way, is that, it's the way God works in and through us, with whatever He's given to us, to win the victory for us.
- Let me explain, often times God grants us the victory against all odds with something that's as odd as the jawbone of a donkey in our hand.

- This because, only He can be the recipient of the glory. In other words, He does it in such a fashion, there's no way we can take the credit.
- For young David, it would be a slingshot and five stones in his hand that God would use to miraculously defeat a Philistine named Goliath.
- For a less known judge by the name of Shamgar, whom we met in Judges 3, it would be an ox goad that God uses to kill six hundred men.

- David Guzik in his commentary writes that Samson's bold declaration of victory has a poetic touch that's difficult to render in translation.
- One effort to capture the poignant and profound meaning of it sort of goes like this; "With the jawbone of an ass I have piled them in mass."
- Guzik goes on to quote a preacher who came up with a five-point sermon on the jawbone of an ass, likening it to the weapon of the gospel.

1. It was a novel weapon
2. It was a most convenient weapon
3. It was a simple weapon
4. It was a ridiculous weapon
5. It was a successful weapon

- There's something else here that can be easily missed at first glance, and it's something for which I think we'd be grossly remiss to miss.
- What I'm speaking of is the fact that there was a tremendous superiority of the Philistine weaponry over the Israelite's ability militarily.
- You probably already know where I'm going with this, so suffice it to say, that greater is He Who is in me than all the weaponry in the world.

1 John 4:4 NKJV You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

2 Corinthians 10:4 NIV The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

1 Corinthians 1:27 NKJV (27) But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

Charles Spurgeon - "The weapon matters little, the force lies in the arm. The Lord can use the weakest to overcome the strongest."

(18) Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the LORD and said, "You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" (19) So God split the hollow place that *is* in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. (20) And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

- Couple of closing thoughts here as we bring the chapter to an end, the first of which is that subsequent to the victory, there comes a trial.
- I'm of the belief that God allows this for a number of reasons not the least of which is that it keeps us in a humble dependence upon Him.
- God knows how that we're all prone to get a little heady and haughty after a great victory, which is why He's faithful to protect us, from us.
- The second thought is really a paradox of sorts, in the sense that God grants this great victory, while allowing him to become a little thirsty.
- You would think that something as small as needing water, would be a given, on the heels of something as great as defeating an enemy.
- This begs the question of why? Why would God allow a seemingly smaller trial close in proximity to a much greater trial? To grow our faith.

Charles Spurgeon - "God, who helps his servants in great matters, sometimes allows them to be greatly tried by comparatively smaller trials, for an exercise of their faith. But he will not leave them in the minor difficulty. Where fell the jawbone from the hero's hand, there rose a refreshing fountain to quench his thirst. God is never at a loss for supplies. We have but to trust Him, and we shall do great things, and receive great things."